

Scheduling Civic Engagement

It is important to be thoughtful when scheduling civic engagement into members' service terms. There are many factors to take into consideration when scheduling CE. Planning out your team's CE schedule early and thoughtfully can provide many benefits and increase the likelihood that members will stay engaged throughout the process.

Considerations for the Entire Program Year

Target Dates for Completing CE

When looking at the entire program year for scheduling CE, it's helpful to keep a few targets in mind. Generally speaking, it works best to try to complete each portion as follows:

- ⇒ Member facilitation should be completed by late winter.
- ⇒ Final arrangements with youth partners should be made by late winter or early spring.
- ⇒ Youth facilitation should be finished by spring.

These targets can be helpful to make sure that your team is on-track for completing the civic engagement requirement, but it is not required to finish each portion as outlined. However, it may be challenging to complete the full requirement if they are not finished by these times.

Scheduling each of these portions is looked at in more detail below under Scheduling Specific Portions of the Process.

Scheduling with Other Member Requirements

Members' other training requirements have a large impact on when it is most feasible to schedule CE. Some questions to consider include:

- ⇒ Can other member trainings complement portions of CE? Can those trainings be scheduled between facilitation of units?
- ⇒ What required trainings are most important for members to get at the beginning of their service term? How will this affect scheduling CE?
- ⇒ How will the team's CE schedule work around SERVES? How can CE be scheduled to best utilize learning opportunities available at SERVES?

Members' Daily Schedules

Members' daily and/or weekly schedules should be considered when scheduling CE, particularly when considering times when members will be coordinating with people outside of the team (e.g. organizing logistics for the member service project). **Members should not be expected to regularly serve outside of their normal service hours to complete civic engagement.** Some questions to consider include:

- ⇒ Will members have the time and/or access to return emails or phone calls in a timely manner? If not, how will this be coordinated?
- ⇒ Do members have time available to adequately plan facilitation with youth and/or members?
- ⇒ If members have different primary service obligations, how will their different schedules and obligations affect who can take the lead on planning and coordination efforts?
- ⇒ If a few members are leading planning and coordination efforts, how is the time for that built into their daily and/or weekly schedule?

Building in Flexibility

Flexibility is important when scheduling any process. However, it should be an additional consideration when scheduling CE due to the curriculum's participant-driven nature. Members and youth should have as much freedom as possible to choose a service project they are committed to. This may mean that schedules will have to be adjusted throughout the program year to shorten or extend project planning time. Some questions to consider include:

- ⇒ What is the preferred amount of time (in team meetings, etc.) that you would like to give members for planning their service project?
- ⇒ If members do not need all of the time you have scheduled for them for project planning, how will you fill the time?
- ⇒ If members need additional project planning time, what is the maximum time you can give them without affecting other training requirements or service obligations?
- ⇒ How can you communicate these scheduling needs to members to help inform their choice for a service project during Unit 6?
- ⇒ How can you incorporate this same flexibility into youth facilitation? How will you address the different possibilities with your youth partner?
- ⇒ What other areas of the process may require flexibility in scheduling? For example, are there units that may take longer to facilitate than outlined in the *Roadmap*?

Scheduling Specific Portions of the Process

Finding a Youth Partner

Finding a youth partner for civic engagement can be a lengthy process, and it is vital to start this process early in the program year. It is highly recommended that Project Supervisors take the lead on finding a youth partner. This can increase the likelihood of teams building partnerships that will continue through program years. Members may assist with the process as an additional skill-building opportunity. However, there are several scheduling factors to remember if Project Supervisors choose to do this, such as:

- ⇒ Members are less likely to have experience and skills at building these types of partnerships at the beginning of their service terms when the effort to find a youth partner should be started. Project Supervisors will need to guide them through the process and provide training in this area, which will take additional training and/or team meeting time.
- ⇒ Organizing the partnership will involve people from outside organizations who may need to communicate with members when they are at their primary service sites. Communication will need to be organized so that partners' needs are met while members serve.
- ⇒ Finding a youth partner can be a lengthy process depending on many different factors. It may be difficult to estimate how much time to schedule for members to do this.

Member Facilitation

Member facilitation of the *Roadmap* usually begins early in the program year. Different teams begin at different times, and it's important to consider a variety of factors when scheduling your team's CE process, such as:

- ⇒ Can portions of the curriculum align well with other team meeting/training goals? For example, Unit 1 is often used to begin teambuilding at the beginning of members' terms. Can other units be scheduled to complement other training goals early in the program year?

- ⇒ The *Roadmap* can seem repetitive to adults because it was designed for the middle-school aged developmental stage (please see Differences Between Facilitating with Members and Youth for more detail). Scheduling facilitation so there are breaks between units can help utilize that repetition as a valuable review for members.
- ⇒ Project planning, particularly with teams, often takes longer than the time set aside in the *Roadmap*. How much time can you allow members to plan their service project thoughtfully? How will the amount of time affect the size of the service project members can choose?
- ⇒ When do you want to complete the member facilitation by? For instance, some teams choose to schedule their service projects on specific service days, such as Make a Difference Day or the Martin Luther King Day of Service. If you want CE service projects scheduled for those days, how will that impact scheduling unit facilitation?
- ⇒ Will members be facilitating portions of the curriculum to each other? If so, when will you give them time to prepare to facilitate?

Youth Facilitation

Scheduling youth facilitation often requires flexibility since it will have to be coordinated with your youth partner(s). Some things to consider include:

- ⇒ When in the program year do you want to schedule CE with youth? How flexible are you on that time of year?
- ⇒ How many sessions would you prefer to have with youth, including project planning sessions? How flexible are you on the number of sessions?
- ⇒ How long will sessions last? Will you facilitate a half unit, whole unit, or multiple units at one time?
- ⇒ How spread out will your sessions be (e.g. once a week, once daily, facilitated back to back in a "camp" style)?
- ⇒ How much time will members facilitating with youth need to plan their facilitation thoughtfully?
- ⇒ Are members or your youth partner interested in having the youth do exploratory service projects? How much time will that add to the entire CE process? If members are planning the projects, how much time will they need to do so thoughtfully?